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Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta
Department of Housing,
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Housing Infrastructure Investment Fund (HIIF)

Project Management Guidelines

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Contents

1. Introduction 5

1.1 Purpose of the Guidelines 5

1.2 Project Lifecycle Phases 6

1.3 Gateways and Hold Points 7

1.4 Interaction with other guidance 7

1.5 Alignment with Infrastructure Guidelines 8

1.6 Structure of the Document 8

2. Governance, Reporting and Publicity 10

2.1 Governance Overview 10

2.2 Management of Projects 10

2.3 Reporting 11

2.4 Draft Documents 11

2.5 Publicity 11

3. Cost Management 13

3.1 Cost Overview 13

3.2 Cost Management Guidelines and Inflation Bulletin 13

3.3 Proportionality 14

3.4 Cost Ranges 14

4. Project Execution Plan, Phase Approvals Process and Expenditure Claims 15

4.1 Project Execution Plan 15

4.2 Phase Approvals 15

4.3 Review Process 16

4.4 Expenditure Claims 16

5. Phase 1: Scope and Purpose 18

5.1 Purpose of Phase 1 18

5.2 Contents of Project Outline Document 18

6. Phase 2: Concept Development and Option Selection 20

6.1 Purpose of Phase 2 20

6.2 Contents of Feasibility Report and Option Selection Report 21

7. Phase 3: Preliminary Design 23

7.1 Purpose of Phase 3 23

7.2 Preliminary Design Report 24

7.3 Preliminary Business Case 24
8. Phase 4: Statutory Process 26
8.1 Purpose of Phase 4 26
8.2 Screening Process 27
8.3 Application for Statutory Approvals 27
8.4 Planning Outcome Report 27
8.5 Land Acquisition and Advance Contracts 28
9. Phase 5: Detailed Design and Procurement 29
9.1 Purpose of Phase 5 30
9.2 Pre-Tender Documents 30
9.2.1 Detailed Design Report 30
9.2.2 Detailed Business Case 30
9.2.3 Procurement Strategy 31
9.2.4 Tender Documents 31
9.3 Post Tender Documents 32
9.3.1 Tender Report 32
9.3.2 Final Business Case 32
10. Phase 6: Construction and Implementation 33
10.1 Purpose of Phase 6 33
10.2 Managing Construction/ Implementation 33
10.3 Project Reporting and Payment 34
10.4 Change Orders 34
10.5 Potential Claims Liability 35
10.6 Intervention Points 35
10.7 Final Account Report 36
11. Phase 7: Close out and Review 37
11.1 Purpose of Phase 7 37
11.2 Project Completion Report 37
11.3 Road Safety Audit (if applicable) 38
11.4 Post Evaluation Report 38
12. Summary of Approval Process 39

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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Guidelines

The purpose of the "*Housing Infrastructure Investment Fund Project Management Guidelines*" (the Guidelines) is to provide a structured approach to ensure the successful delivery and oversight of capital infrastructure projects funded by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (the "Department") through the Housing Infrastructure Investment Fund (HIIF) and managed by the Housing Activation Office (HAO)[1]. These guidelines provide a framework to ensure that projects are developed and implemented in an appropriate manner and at optimal cost.

The Guidelines set out the key documentation to be developed by Sponsoring Agencies, which, in addition to ensuring compliance with the requirements of the Infrastructure Guidelines published by the Department of Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation (the Infrastructure Guidelines), will also provide a robust basis for project development and delivery.

The Guidelines are based on the role assigned to a Government Department as the 'Approving Authority' under the Infrastructure Guidelines, and the role of the agency delivering the project as the 'Sponsoring Agency'[2].

As the Guidelines are focused on the oversight and monitoring of capital investments, Sponsoring Agencies should supplement these Guidelines with their own project management procedures and processes to manage the delivery stages of their capital investment projects.

These Guidelines do not aim to be a full statement of the duties and obligations of a Sponsoring Agency or a project team. Responsibility for ensuring that projects are progressed in accordance with applicable legislation, standards and other relevant guidelines remains with

[1] All references to HAO approval in the Guidelines, refer to approval by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage as the Approving Authority.

[2] The public agency with primary responsibility for evaluating, planning and managing the public investment project within the parameters of the Infrastructure Guidelines.

the Sponsoring Agency and the project team.

To ensure proportionality of application, these Guidelines are structured around three project bands, as set out below:

Project Bands
Band 1: Up to €10 million
Band 2: €10 million to €20 million
Band 3: Greater than € 20 million

1.2 Project Lifecycle Phases

These Guidelines divide the development of a capital infrastructure project progressed under the HIIF into seven distinct "Phases" as follows:

Table 1 – HIIF Project Lifecycle Phases

Project Phase	HIIF Phase Approval	Infrastructure Guidelines Approval Gate (AG)
Phase 1: Scope and Purpose	Phase 1 Approval	
Phase 2: Concept Development & Option Selection	Phase 2 Approval	
Phase 3: Preliminary Design	Phase 3 Approval	**AG 1 Approval**
Phase 4: Statutory Processes	Phase 4 Approval	
Phase 5: Detailed Design & Procurement	Phase 5A & 5B Approval	**AG 2 & AG 3 Approval**
Phase 6: Construction & Implementation	Phase 6 Approval	
Phase 7: Close-out & Review	Phase 7 Approval	

Given the nature of the HIIF programme it is recognised that some projects may enter the programme at a later phase, for example at Phase 4 Statutory Consent or Phase 5 Detailed Design and Procurement.

1.3 Gateways and Hold Points

The term “Phase Approvals” as used in these Guidelines, refers to Approvals, which occur at key points in the lifecycle of a project. These approvals align with the end of a particular stage in the project lifecycle.

The purpose is to ensure that a project has met certain requirements before it progresses on to the next phase. Requirements include a level of certainty in relation to scope, cost, quality, and time as well as value and benefits. The HIIF “Phase Approvals” process will ensure that key milestones are met and informed decisions are made in relation to the future phases of a project.

Subsequent sections set out the key deliverables to be developed by the Sponsoring Agency to successfully pass each “HIIF Phase Approval”.

In addition to “Phase Approvals”, there are also a number of more significant “Hold Points” for projects under the HIIF. At a Hold Point, the Sponsoring Agency will be required to make a formal submission to the HAO, and to pause the next steps pending formal approval from the HAO to proceed. A limited number of Hold Points are identified in the subsequent sections. However, should the need arise, the HAO may request additional hold points in respect of an individual project, depending on relevant project details and particular circumstances.

As Approving Authority, the HAO requires that the Sponsoring Agency compiles the necessary evidence to demonstrate the application of these Guidelines to each project.

The HAO will endeavour to ensure that the documentation required at each HIIF Phase Approval is proportionate to the size and complexity of the project being delivered. In some cases, particularly for smaller or simpler projects, certain phases may be combined, or some documentation may not be required to pass a particular HIIF Phase Approval. However, such an approach requires prior HAO approval.

1.4 Interaction with other guidance

These Guidelines complement, and do not replace, other relevant national guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Infrastructure Guidelines published by the Department of Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation;
- Circular No. 02/2022: "Application of Guidelines and Standards in relation to works on Public Roads in Ireland" by the National (Infrastructure) Guidelines and Standards Group of the Department of Transport;
- Circular No. 13/2014 entitled "Management of and Accountability for Grants from Exchequer Funds", (DPER) or any updated relevant Circulars; and
- Capital Works Management Framework including associated Guidance Notes published by the Office of Public Procurement.

1.5 Alignment with Infrastructure Guidelines

These Guidelines have been developed to fully align with the Infrastructure Guidelines. The three Approval Gates set out in the Infrastructure Guidelines are as follows:

- **Approval Gate 1** - Strategic Assessment & Preliminary Business Case: approval in principle for the proposal to proceed;
- **Approval Gate 2** – Pre Tender Project Design, Planning and Procurement Strategy: approval for the project to proceed to tender; and
- **Approval Gate 3** - Final Business Case: approval to award the main construction contract.

HIIF Phase 3 Approval aligns with Approval Gate 1 of the Infrastructure Guidelines. HIIF Phase 5A Approval aligns with Approval Gate 2 of the Infrastructure Guidelines, while HIIF Phase 5B Approval aligns to Approval Gate 3 of the Infrastructure Guidelines.

The Sponsoring Agency will be required to satisfy the HAO that the requirements of the Infrastructure Guidelines for Approval Gates that arise when the project is in the HIIF capital programme are satisfied. In cases where a project enters the HIIF programme at an advanced stage, for example where Planning Consent or Detailed Design is complete, the compatibility of the earlier stages with the Infrastructure Guidelines will be considered as part of the application assessment and the initial project execution process.

1.6 Structure of the Document

Following this introductory Section 1, subsequent Sections 2, 3 and 4 provide general information on items related to the overall management of projects.

Sections 5 to 11 set out the key deliverables required to be provided to the HAO during each of the seven-lifecycle phases, together with other relevant information relating to the particular phase.

Section 12 provides a summary chart of the seven phases, the relevant gateways and the key deliverables within each phase.

2. Governance, Reporting and Publicity

2.1 Governance Overview

The Infrastructure Guidelines set out the roles and responsibilities of the Approving Authority and the Sponsoring Agency. The Department is the Approving Authority for infrastructure projects funded under the HIIF. In order to fulfil this role, the Housing Activation Office (HAO) Programme Manager assigned to each Sponsoring Agency should be consulted and sufficiently informed at each key milestone in the project's development, to enable sound decisions, as may be appropriate, on the next phase of work and/or project changes.

2.2 Management of Projects

Each project should have an in-house Project Manager or Project Director or equivalent, appointed by the Sponsoring Agency, who will have responsibility for the day-to-day development and delivery of the project. The Project Manager/Director must follow their respective Sponsoring Agency's project management processes to plan, execute, monitor, control and complete the relevant project.

For larger projects and development areas that require cross agency investment across multiple projects, it may be necessary to set up a Project Board or Steering Committee to provide additional oversight. The HAO should be consulted prior to establishing such a Board or Committee. The HAO reserves the right to require the establishment of a Board or Committee in respect of a particular project or area and to nominate representatives to sit on that Board or Committee.

On larger projects, the Project Board typically will include a representative from the Approving Authority and may include representatives from key stakeholders such as the utility companies. The Project Board will normally be chaired by a senior representative from the Sponsoring Agency, unless agreed otherwise by the HAO.

The overarching role of the Project Board will be to oversee the development and delivery of the project, to provide executive oversight of the project's execution and to be the decision-making body on key matters related to the project.

2.3 Reporting

Good communications and reporting are essential parts of the successful delivery of projects and programmes. All projects are required to have regular reporting and communication between the Sponsoring Agency and the HAO regardless of the project size.

For effective project management and oversight, it is important that quarterly reports are submitted for each project using the report template issued by the HAO, providing, among other things, key information on progress and expenditure, as well as detailing risks, issues and opportunities as applicable. Updates on consultation with key stakeholders including utility companies shall also be provided.

The Sponsoring Agency is required to submit a quarterly report on each funded project to the HAO in the first week of each quarter via the designated email HIIFprogramme@housing.ie. This will form the basis for quarterly meetings with the HAO Programme Manager. The level of detail in such reports should be commensurate with the project size and value. Significant detail will be required for larger projects, whereas less detail may be sufficient for smaller projects. The level of detail should be agreed with the HAO Programme Manager from the outset. The reports shall be submitted in a prescribed format using the report template provided by the HAO. The HAO may require additional ad-hoc meetings at its request.

2.4 Draft Documents

In order to support effective project development, the HAO may require documents to be provided in early draft form for initial review and feedback before formal submission for approval.

2.5 Publicity

Information regarding projects is released to the general public at specific stages during the project development. The Department has specific requirements that must be met when releasing information about a project into the public domain that can change from time to time. The Sponsoring Agency shall liaise with the HAO Programme Manager to ensure compliance with these requirements and to ensure a coordinated response within both organisations to queries from the public and media.

Prior approval must be obtained from the HAO for any press releases / media events for HIIF funded projects.

3. Cost Management

3.1 Cost Overview

The management of costs on a project is one of the most critical areas of project management. However, just as important as managing the delivery costs is the development of robust cost estimates for the project as the design evolves.

The most frequent cause of cost overruns on projects is inadequate cost estimation and budgetary provision. Insufficient recognition of project uncertainties and inadequate allowance to address those uncertainties are frequent occurrences on capital projects.

Accordingly, Sponsoring Agencies are required to give appropriate attention to ensuring that project budgets are properly developed, using reliable cost data and applying appropriate allowances for risk, contingency and for inflation.

3.2 Cost Management Guidelines and Inflation Bulletin

Both TII and the NTA has published Cost Management Guidelines and associated templates plus a contingency calculator, which have been developed to assist Sponsoring Agencies to achieve robust cost estimates at each stage in the project life cycle. Sponsoring Agencies are required to refer to those documents for guidance when preparing cost estimates for HIIF funded transport projects.

The Sponsoring Agency will also need to obtain cost estimates for water and wastewater infrastructure from Uisce Éireann and for electrical infrastructure from ESB Networks and Eirgrid where appropriate. These costs shall be integrated into the overall project cost estimate.

In addition, the NTA publishes an Inflation Bulletin, updated periodically, to provide guidance on the inclusion of inflation in cost estimates and project budgets that will provide a useful reference point for transport projects. The Sponsoring Agency shall refer to the latest NTA Bulletin when preparing or updating cost estimates at each phase.

3.3 Proportionality

It is recognised that the level of cost analysis will vary by project size and sometimes by project type. For larger infrastructure projects (€20m +), very robust cost estimation is required, which is likely to involve specialist quantity surveyors or cost consultants.

Simpler approaches can be utilised for smaller projects provided that they deliver robust and reliable cost and budget estimates.

3.4 Cost Ranges

Consideration should be given to the use of cost ranges on projects, particularly at early project stages. Frequently, single point estimates for a project are given at the embryonic stages of a scheme, when the level of unknowns about the project are at their maximum. This frequently provides an inappropriate point of reference for subsequent cost comparisons on the project, as it matures through its development stages and its full implications are better understood.

The use of a cost range instead of a single point estimate should provide higher certainty of later costs and align better with earlier estimates. Indeed, a cost range can be used throughout the project life cycle, with the extent of the range narrowing as the project develops and the number of uncertainties and risks decrease.

4. Project Execution Plan, Phase Approvals Process and Expenditure Claims

4.1 Project Execution Plan

The Project Execution Plan (PEP) is a key document for managing a project and sets out the policies and procedures governing the delivery of the particular scheme. It provides a comprehensive description of the project's scope, objectives and delivery arrangements in a structured format. Its purpose is to provide an overall framework to guide the subsequent delivery of the project to the required specifications, within the project capital budget, and to a set timeframe.

The contents of a typical PEP are set out in Document GN 1.1 (Project Management) of the Capital Works Management Framework published by the Office of Public Procurement. Using this document the HAO has developed a standard Project Execution Plan Template for HIIF projects (insert link). The PEP's submitted to the HAO should adhere to the HIIF PEP Template.

In addition to cost management details, the PEP should also include a Risk Register for the project, which should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

The first version of the PEP should be developed by the Sponsoring Agency at the start of Phase 2 (Concept Development and Option Selection). That PEP should be provided to the HAO Programme Manager during Phase 2, or as soon as possible after acceptance of the project into the HIIF programme, and an updated PEP, or confirmation that the previous PEP still applies, should be provided as part of each subsequent Phase Approval.

4.2 Phase Approvals

When a Sponsoring Agency seeks approval to proceed to the next phase of a project, it shall submit a "HIIF Phase Approval Request" to the HAO via the HIIFprogramme@housing.gov.ie mailbox seeking such approval. The HAO has developed a standard HIIF Phase Approval Request Template (insert link). The Phase Approval Requests submitted to the HAO should adhere to this template. The Phase Approval Request shall include the following:

- Confirmation that the required deliverables for the that phase have already been provided to the HAO Programme Manager or are being provided as part of the request;
- Confirmation that the Project Execution Plan (PEP) previously provided to the HAO at the end of the prior phase is still the applicable PEP or that an updated version of the PEP is being provided as part of the request; and
- An outline plan and projected budget for the next phase of the project.

4.3 Review Process

Following receipt of a HIIF Phase Approval Request from the Sponsoring Agency, the HAO will review the request and material provided. The review process may require further information or clarification to be provided in relation to relevant items and in some cases a meeting between the Sponsoring Agency and the HAO.

Following the review process, the HAO will confirm the outcome of the Phase Approval Request to the Sponsoring Agency.

In some cases, the HAO may be unable to grant approval to the Phase Approval Request where it considers that the project as progressed would not achieve the objectives of the original approval, the required quality standard or where the required documentation has not been provided.

In other cases, as the HIIF matures and a level of prioritisation is needed, the HAO may confirm that the deliverables provided are all satisfactory, but that, due to funding or other constraints, approval to proceed to the next phase is not being granted at that point in time.

4.4 Expenditure Claims

The annual allocations for each project will form the basis for reimbursement for eligible expenditure incurred in progressing approved projects.

The HAO will issue a quarterly call for claims in respect of eligible expenditure incurred on approved projects within the annual allocation. The Sponsoring Agency is required to submit claims in response to these calls, covering expenditure incurred during the relevant period and not previously claimed. Funding must be drawn down as liabilities mature and as invoices are issued for payment.

All claims for grant funding must:

- Be based on vouched eligible expenditure incurred (refer to HIIF Eligible Expenditure Guidelines) (insert link);
- Relate directly to the approved scope of the project(s);
- Be supported by a Statement of Expenditure, duly certified by an appropriate officer (Director of Services or Chief Executive);
- Be in compliance with Circular No. 13/2014 entitled “Management of and Accountability for Grants from Exchequer Funds” (DPER).

Grant payments will be made on a quarterly basis, in arrears, following verification of submitted claims. Prior to submitting a claim for new cost categories, including professional services or enabling works, the Sponsoring Agency must engage with the HAO Programme Manager to confirm eligibility and approved funding levels.

Grant funding may only be applied wholly and exclusively to the delivery of approved project(s) and within the approved project scope.

The accuracy of all financial and project information submitted by the Sponsoring Agency is of critical importance. This information will be relied upon for programme oversight, public accountability and policy evaluation and is subject to audit.

5. Phase 1: Scope and Purpose

Project Band	Project – Band 1	Project – Band 2	Project – Band 3
	< €10m	**€10m to €20m**	**Above €20m**
Key Deliverables	Completed Project Grant Application Form	Completed Project Grant Application Form	Completed Project Grant Application Form Project Outline Document
Approval Point	**HIIF Phase 1 Approval Request**	**HIIF Phase 1 Approval Request**	**HIIF Phase 1 Approval Request**
	Approval to proceed to Phase 2	Approval to proceed to Phase 2	Approval to proceed to Phase 2

5.1 Purpose of Phase 1

The purpose of this Phase is to establish sufficient outline details of the project to allow an informed decision to be made in relation to the provision of initial funding of the particular proposal.

For Band 1 and Band 2 projects, the Completed HIIF Application Form and acceptance onto the HIIF programme is the key deliverable for Phase 1. For Band 3 proposals, a Project Outline Document is also required.

The required outcome of Phase 1 is that both the HAO and the Sponsoring Agency share an understanding of the expected scope, timescale, costs and outcomes of the project, subject to more detailed concept development and feasibility work at the next Phase.

5.2 Contents of Project Outline Document

The Project Outline Document should contain the following information:

- Outline description of the proposal;
- Policy alignment assessment;
- Indicative cost range for affordability assessment;
- Appraisal plan setting out the intended approach to appraising the project; and
- Outline of governance arrangements.

The HAO has developed a standard HIIF Project Outline Document Template which should form the basis for the Project Outline Document (insert link).

6. Phase 2: Concept Development and Option Selection

Project Band	Project – Band 1	Project – Band 2	Project – Band 3
	< €10m	€10m to €20m	Above €20m
Key Deliverables	Project Execution Plan Option Selection Report	Project Execution Plan Option Selection Report	Project Execution Plan Feasibility and Option Selection Report
Approval Point	**HIIF Phase 2 Approval Request**	**HIIF Phase 2 Approval Request**	**HIIF Phase 2 Approval Request**
	Approval to proceed to Phase 3	Approval to proceed to Phase 3	Approval to proceed to Phase 3

6.1 Purpose of Phase 2

The purpose of this Phase is to assess the feasibility of the proposal and undertake a comprehensive options assessment process, to ensure that the optimal project alternative is identified for progression.

Most HIIF funded projects will involve the provision of a variety of infrastructure such as roads, water and wastewater and other utilities, so it is important that an appropriate analysis is undertaken to ensure that the project scope is developed to address the overall infrastructure needs of the identified zoned lands and wider area.

This phase will also confirm technical and initial economic feasibility; establish the limits of the scope, the order of cost and the extent of benefits that can be obtained. This feasibility work will enable the Sponsoring Agency and the HAO to decide whether to proceed further with the development of the project.

Options assessment is one of the most critical phases in the project lifecycle and it is important that the process adequately evaluates the available options taking into account the intended purpose of the project under the HIIF programme and identifies the best option for development.

6.2 Contents of Feasibility Report and Option Selection Report

For smaller Band 1 and Band 2 schemes, the Feasibility Report and Option Selection Report can be combined into a singular document or developed as separate reports.

The Feasibility Report should address the following matters:

- Benefitting lands to be serviced and the estimated housing capacity of the lands;
- Analysis of the infrastructure required to support planned growth;
- Policy background;
- Outline of infrastructure types proposed;
- Confirmation of technical feasibility;
- Outline of other secondary benefits;
- Order of magnitude of costs on a range basis; and
- Outline of challenges / risks.

In relation to the Option Selection Report, it shall address the following items:

- Area of benefitting lands to be serviced;
- Assessment of infrastructure required;
- Identification of requirements of utility companies;
- Assessment of available options;
- Identification of preferred option;
- Outline of challenges /risks;
- Feasibility working cost estimate; and
- Indicative planning and procurement approach.

In assessing the Option Selection Report, it will be acknowledged that the need for the project and its objectives relating to housing activation were assessed as part of the acceptance process onto the HIIF programme and that the options for consideration at this stage will generally relate to project specific matters.

The level of assessment undertaken in relation to alternatives should be proportionate to the scale of the proposal. For smaller Band 1 projects, the assessment may be relatively simple and short, while for larger schemes more complex evaluations will be required.

The Sponsoring Agency is required to liaise with Uisce Éireann, ESB Networks and other relevant utility companies during this phase to ensure that the requirements of the utility companies are understood and agreed and that they are included in the scope during the design development of the project. Such engagement shall include the submission of requisite information to the relevant utility company for review and comment, and the Sponsoring Agency shall ensure that all requirements and constraints identified by the utility companies are incorporated into the Feasibility Report and Options Selection Report. The HAO Programme Manager will support the necessary engagements.

In cases where a project is accepted into the HIIF programme at a later stage of development the HAO may request documentation from the Sponsoring Agency setting out the process followed to select the preferred option, and the reasons why that option was chosen.

7. Phase 3: Preliminary Design

Project Band	Project – Band 1	Project – Band 2	Project – Band 3
	< 10m	€10m to €20m	Above €20m
Key Deliverables	Simplified Preliminary Design Report *(inclusive of updated cost information and any required audit confirmations)* Simplified Preliminary Business Case	Preliminary Design Report *(inclusive of updated cost information and any required audit confirmations)* Simplified Preliminary Business Case	Preliminary Design Report (inclusive of updated cost information and any required audit confirmations) Preliminary Business Case
Approval Point	**HIIF Phase 3 Approval Request**	**HIIF Phase 3 Approval Request**	**HIIF Phase 3 Approval Request**
	Approval to proceed to Phase 4	Approval to proceed to Phase 4	Approval to proceed to Phase 4

7.1 Purpose of Phase 3

During this Phase, the Sponsoring Agency, following the selection of a preferred option, develops a design for the project, to a level where, in the case of infrastructure projects, there is a general layout and sufficient details prepared for the project to establish land-take requirements (if applicable), key environmental impacts and a robust preliminary cost estimate. This is referred as a "Preliminary Design" and it needs to be sufficiently developed to support the preparation of the relevant planning and statutory consenting documentation.

The Preliminary Design should include details of the infrastructure requirements of Uisce Éireann, ESB Networks and the other utility companies and transport agencies. It is imperative that the Sponsoring Agency liaises closely with the utility companies during this

phase to ensure that their requirements are included, and that the design of that infrastructure is in accordance with the appropriate design standards. The preliminary design should be sufficiently developed to allow for the development of a Preliminary Business Case.

The Preliminary Design Report should consider the project's objectives and ensure that the design addresses those objectives. In the case of certain small scale Band 1 projects, it may be more practical to proceed straight to Detailed Design at this stage, rather than developing a Preliminary Design and a subsequent Detailed Design at a later stage. This requirements for Band 1 projects should be agreed with the HAO Programme Manager in advance of commencement of design.

7.2 Preliminary Design Report

The Preliminary Design Report should, in the case of infrastructure projects, include the Preliminary Design Drawings and associated specifications and should provide details of:

- Benefitting lands to be serviced;
- Overall layout and general arrangements;
- Utility company requirements;
- Land-take requirements;
- Overview of potential environmental impacts;
- Mitigation measures;
- Cost information (detailed cost information should be included as an appendix or supporting document).

In developing the Preliminary Design, the Sponsoring Agency should ensure that they engage regularly with the HAO Programme Manager to agree key design items on an ongoing basis, and to ensure that the requirements of utility companies are being addressed.

7.3 Preliminary Business Case

The contents of the Preliminary Business Case shall align with the requirements set out in the Infrastructure Guidelines.

The HAO applies the principle of proportionality to the development of Preliminary Business Cases for HIIF funded projects. The scale and detail of the evaluation should be commensurate with the proposal under consideration and should primarily focus on the housing activation potential of the investment.

The HAO has developed “Guidance on the Preparation of Preliminary Business Cases for HIIF Funded Projects” and a HIIF Preliminary Business Case Template (insert link). The Template should form the basis for Preliminary Business Cases submitted to the HAO.

8. Phase 4: Statutory Process

Project Band	Project – Band 1	Project – Band 2	Project – Band 3
	< €10m	€10m to €20m	Above €20m
Key Deliverables	Final documentation for planning/statutory consent	Final documentation for planning/statutory consent	Final documentation for planning/statutory consent
	Hold Point ✋ (aligns with IG Approval Gate 1)	Hold Point ✋ (aligns with IG Approval Gate 1)	Hold Point ✋ (aligns with IG Approval Gate 1)
	Planning Outcome Report	Planning Outcome Report	Planning Outcome Report
Approval Point	**HIIF Phase 4 Approval Request**	**HIIF Phase 4 Approval Request**	**HIIF Phase 4 Approval Request**
	Approval to proceed to Phase 5	Approval to proceed to Phase 5	Approval to proceed to Phase 5

8.1 Purpose of Phase 4

The purpose of Phase 4 is to finalise the statutory consent documents (including planning, environmental and land acquisition as applicable) for a project, seek the appropriate statutory approvals and support the required approval processes to conclusion.

8.2 Screening Process

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) screening is a key step in the statutory consents process which will determine the more appropriate statutory consent processes for HIIF projects.

8.3 Application for Statutory Approvals

The Sponsoring Agency shall consult with the HAO to ensure agreement on the relevant project details prior to submitting any documents for statutory planning approval. This is particularly important where the project parameters, in terms of design, costs and benefits, have changed in any significant way from those developed and validated in Phase 3.

A “Hold Point” is included in the project approval process to ensure that the Sponsoring Agency obtains HAO consent prior to seeking statutory planning approval. This Hold Point aligns with Approval Gate 1 in the Infrastructure Guidelines.

Failure to obtain HAO consent prior to the submission of the planning documentation may result in the withdrawal of HIIF funding for the project.

The statutory consent documents must be prepared in accordance with the applicable legislation and should reflect an understanding of issues and sensitivities that are likely to be of importance in the consent process.

8.4 Planning Outcome Report

The Sponsoring Agency should, as soon as practicable after the planning procedure concludes, produce a report of the outcome of the planning process. This report should include:

- the outcome of the planning process including a copy of the planning approval(s);
- a review of any impacts that the terms of approval may have on the scheme going forward; and
- identify any changes arising from the planning processes to the project brief, costs and/or benefits of the proposed project, or other matters which would be likely to alter the initial appraisal.

If statutory approval is not granted, this should be reported to the HAO Programme Manager. Potential alterations to the proposals may be discussed at this stage.

In cases where the planning consent may have been secured a number of years in advance of the project being accepted into the HIIF programme, the Sponsoring Agency shall confirm to the HAO that the consent is still valid and reflects the current scope of the proposed scheme, and that no changes will be required prior to proceeding to implementation.

8.5 Land Acquisition and Advance Contracts

Both during and at the end of this Phase 4, the HAO may authorise the progression of certain land acquisitions and/or advance contracts. This may be authorised separately from approval to commence Phase 5, particularly where funding to commence Phase 5 and/or Phase 6 is not immediately available.

It is generally expected that the owners of housing lands that will benefit from HIIF investment will transfer the land needed to deliver the project to the Sponsoring Agency through contract agreement, and that no land cost will arise in such instances. In the case of third-party lands that do not benefit commercially from the HIIF investment but do need to be acquired to progress the project, the HAO will engage with the Sponsoring Agency in relation to any costs arising from the land acquisition process.

9. Phase 5: Detailed Design and Procurement

Project Band	Project – Band 1	Project – Band 2	Project – Band 3
	< €10m	€10m to €20m	Above €20m
Key Deliverables	Simplified Detailed Design Report, *(inclusive of updated cost information and any required audit confirmations)* Simplified Detailed Business Case and Tender Documents	Simplified Detailed Design Report, *(inclusive of updated cost information and any required audit confirmations)* Simplified Detailed Business Case Procurement Strategy and Tender Documents	Detailed Design Report, (inclusive of updated cost information and any required audit confirmations) Detailed Business Case Procurement Strategy and Tender Documents
Approval Point	**HIIF Phase 5A Approval Request** Aligns with IG Approval Gate 2	**HIIF Phase 5A Approval Request** Aligns with IG Approval Gate 2	**HIIF Phase 5A Approval Request** Aligns with IG Approval Gate 2
	Detailed Design Report Detailed Business Case	Detailed Design Report Detailed Business Case	Detailed Design Report Detailed Business Case
Approval Point	**HIIF Phase 5B Approval Request** Aligns with IG Approval Gate 3	**HIIF Phase 5B Approval Request** Aligns with IG Approval Gate 3	**HIIF Phase 5B Approval Request** Aligns with IG Approval Gate 3
	Tender Report Final Business Case	Tender Report Final Business Case	Tender Report Final Business Case
	Approval to proceed to Phase 6	Approval to proceed to Phase 6	Approval to proceed to Phase 6

9.1 Purpose of Phase 5

The purpose of Phase 5 is for the Sponsoring Agency to undertake, or co-ordinate, the preparation of the detailed design and tender documentation for the implementation of the project and to procure and award the construction/ implementation contracts.

As part of this process, the Sponsoring Agency is also to prepare and finalise the Detailed Business Case and the Final Business Case, (the Final Business Case is essentially the Detailed Business Case updated at the end of the tender process).

9.2 Pre-Tender Documents

9.2.1 Detailed Design Report

The Detailed Design Report should constitute the further development of the Preliminary Design Report prepared during Phase 3 to a level sufficient for tendering and/or construction purposes (depending on type of contract). For smaller Band 1 projects, the detailed design report may be relatively simple and short, while for larger schemes more comprehensive design reports will be required.

9.2.2 Detailed Business Case

The provision of a Detailed Business Case as part of the pre-tender decision making process is a requirement of the Infrastructure Guidelines (Approval Gate 2). Those guidelines set out that the document is intended to comprise an update of the Preliminary Business Case, incorporating new information and refinement of initial details, reflecting the further development of the project.

For HIIF funded projects, this requirement is most effectively addressed by developing the Detailed Business Case as an early version of the Final Business Case, which is required for Approval Gate 5B following receipt of tenders. This approach has the advantage of facilitating a speedier process following receipt of tenders, when the time constraints of a tender validity period operates.

Accordingly, the contents of the Detailed Business Case for Phase 5A should align, as far as practicable, with the requirements for the Final Business Case.

9.2.3 Procurement Strategy

The initial procurement strategy should have been identified as part of the Preliminary Business Case. As part of this Phase, those proposals should be updated to reflect the finalised approach to the implementation of the scheme.

9.2.4 Tender Documents

The quality of tender documentation is fundamental to the success of the construction stage. It is important that Sponsoring Agencies put in place appropriate assurance arrangements to quality check tender documentation before their release to tenderers. Key areas to focus on are ensuring that all the known requirements of the project have been incorporated and that the documents are drafted in clear contractual language. On larger and more complex projects, a separate independent peer review of the tender documents may be warranted. This shall be agreed on a case-by-case basis with the HAO Programme Manager.

In all cases where there is an Uisce Éireann, ESB Networks and/or other utility infrastructure components to the project, and prior to the award of a construction contract, the Sponsoring Agency shall provide written confirmation to the HAO that:

- The Tender documents incorporate all requirements of Uisce Éireann, ESB Networks and other relevant utility companies,
- Uisce Éireann have reviewed the design and cost estimate pertaining to the water and wastewater elements of the works, and similar for the other utility infrastructure,
- Uisce Éireann and/or the other utility companies are satisfied that it can be included in the tender package,
- The Sponsoring Agency has entered into ancillary contracts as required and where appropriate such as a State Body Agreement with Uisce Éireann and/or with other utility companies.

The Sponsoring Agency shall only issue tender documents to the market after HIIF Phase 5a Approval has been issued by the HAO.

Failure to obtain HAO consent prior to the issue of the tender documents may result in the withdrawal of HIIF funding for the project.

9.3 Post Tender Documents

9.3.1 Tender Report

Following the receipt and evaluation of the tenders, a Tender Report shall be prepared and submitted to the HAO for approval to proceed to the next Phase (Infrastructure Guidelines Approval Gate 3), summarising the tender process, the details of tenders received and the outcome of the evaluation process.

Given the importance of the tender process, the Sponsoring Agency shall ensure that the persons involved in the process have the appropriate skills and experience, and have appropriate support available to them, to manage the process competently.

9.3.2 Final Business Case

A Final Business Case shall be prepared following the completion of the tender process. The Final Business Case is essentially the Detailed Business Case prepared for HIIF Phase 5A Approval, updated to reflect the outcome of the tender process.

Where there have been material changes from the circumstances reported in the Detailed Business Case prepared for HIIF Phase 5A Approval, the Final Business Case document should be revised to incorporate the relevant changes, in particular any changes in budget/cost arising from the tender process.

In the interests of proportionality, shorter and simpler Final Business Cases can be provided for Band 1 and Band 2 projects.

The Final Business Case is required to include the finalised post-tender financial information. This should include any updates to the cost information taking account of the contract sums for the main contracts and any changes to base costs (e.g. land and property) as necessary. In addition, any changes to the risk and contingency analysis should also be included.

The Sponsoring Agency shall provide evidence as part of its HIIF Phase 5B Approval submission that it has control of all lands necessary to construct the works.

10. Phase 6: Construction and Implementation

Project Band	Project – Band 1	Project – Band 2	Project – Band 3
	< €10m	€10m to €20m	Over €20m
Reporting Requirements	Regular Progress Reports informing on cost and programme. Change order Information (If applicable)	Regular Progress Reports informing on cost and programme. Change order Information (If applicable)	Regular Progress Reports informing on cost and programme. Change order Information (If applicable)
Key Deliverables	Final Account Report	Final Account Report	Final Account Report
Approval Point	**HIIF Phase 6 Approval Request**	**HIIF Phase 6 Approval Request**	**HIIF Phase 6 Approval Request**
	Approval to proceed to Phase 7	Approval to proceed to Phase 7	Approval to proceed to Phase 7

10.1 Purpose of Phase 6

The purpose of this Phase is for the Sponsoring Agency to award the construction contract(s) having completed the tender process and to undertake the construction and implementation activities.

10.2 Managing Construction/ Implementation

The Capital Works Management Framework (CWMF) published by the Office of Government Procurement, provides detailed guidance for this Phase of a project lifecycle. The CWMF describes key steps to be taken in works contract management, which are designed to ensure smooth delivery of projects.

Guidance is also provided in relation to, among other things, roles and responsibilities, managing the works in progress, managing risk, calculating price variations, project

completion and handover. The Sponsoring Agency shall follow the CWMF guidance for the implementation of projects procured under the various CWMF forms of contract.

As part of the CWMF forms of contract, a person shall be appointed to act as Employer's Representative (ER) on behalf of the Sponsoring Agency in accordance with the requirements of the relevant contract.

Notwithstanding the appointment of the Employer's Representative, overall responsibility for the delivery of the project shall remain with the Project Manager/Project Director.

10.3 Project Reporting and Payment

During the construction Phase, the Employers Representative will prepare a monthly report for the Sponsoring Agency which shall include progress and expenditure matters pertaining to the project. These reports should communicate clearly the status of the project and the existence of any significant issues or challenges, change orders and potential risks to the programme and budget.

The Sponsoring Agency shall provide a copy of the Employers Representative's monthly report to the HAO Programme Manager.

10.4 Change Orders

It shall be an objective of each design or construction phase contract that the use of contract variations or Change Orders is minimised or avoided if possible.

During construction phase, where an individual Change Order or a cumulative number of Change Orders, exceed the HAO approved contract sum by more than the amounts set out below, reimbursement by the Department, of expenditure incurred in respect of such Change Orders will only be facilitated in cases where formal written approval has been obtained from the HAO via the HIIFprogramme@housing.gov.ie mailbox in advance of the Change Order instruction to the contractor:

- €100,000 for contracts up to €10m;
- €150,000 for contracts between €10m and €20m;
- €200,000 for contracts above €20m.

For Change Orders below these amounts, the Sponsoring Agency must notify the details in the subsequent ER's monthly progress report to the HAO Programme Manager. This information, along with full details of any overall anticipated project cost changes, are essential to ensure the continued funding of the project.

The HAO reserves the right to change the values of change orders requiring prior written approval, particularly where there are a large number of Change Orders arising on a project.

An up-to-date register of all issued Change Orders, inclusive of their values, shall be included in the ER's monthly Progress Report.

10.5 Potential Claims Liability

The Sponsoring Agency shall notify the HAO if there is a potential claims liability which may impact on the scope, quality, cost, or programme for completion of the project and/or if there is an impact on the Total Project Cost. It is advisable that the Sponsoring Agency should notify the HAO of any potential significant contractual claims as soon as the Employer's Representative becomes aware of them.

The Employer's Representative shall maintain such records as are necessary in order to properly assess and make a considered determination on any claim(s) submitted.

10.6 Intervention Points

Should circumstances necessitate it, and within the context of any contractual arrangements, the HAO may intervene in the project implementation as required to address issues that it considers necessary or appropriate to address. The HAO will liaise closely with the Sponsoring Agency to work through any proposed interventions.

Amongst other forms, Interventions may take the form of the following:

- Changes to governance arrangements;
- Changes to implementation management;
- Changes to scope;
- Changes to delivery timeframes;

- Cancellation of the project; and/or
- Changes to wider external environment.

10.7 Final Account Report

Once the final outturn cost of the construction / implementation contract(s) has been determined, the Sponsoring Agency, in conjunction with the Employer's Representative, shall prepare a Final Account Report in accordance with the HIIF Cost Management Guidelines relating to the contract(s). Pending the publication of the HIIF Cost Management Guidelines Sponsoring Agencies should refer to the NTA Cost Management Guidelines, last updated in 2024.

11. Phase 7: Close out and Review

Project Band	Project – Band 1	Project – Band 2	Project – Band 3
	< €10m	€10m to €20m	Above €20m
Key Deliverables	Project Completion Report Confirmation of Safety and Quality Audits (if applicable)	Project Completion Report Confirmation of Safety and Quality Audits (if applicable)	Project Completion Report Confirmation of Safety and Quality Audits (if applicable)
Approval Point	**HIIF Phase 7 Approval Request**	**HIIF Phase 7 Approval Request**	**HIIF Phase Approval Request**
	Annual Post Evaluation Report for 5 years	Annual Post Evaluation Report for 5 years	Annual Post Evaluation Report for 5 years
	Project Closure	Project Closure	Project Closure

11.1 Purpose of Phase 7

The purpose of Phase 7 is to ensure that:

- the project is properly closed out, without any outstanding issues;
- the project was delivered as specified;
- the project achieved its objectives; and
- lessons learned have been captured and documented for use on future schemes.

11.2 Project Completion Report

At the completion of the project, the Sponsoring Agency shall prepare a Project Completion Report, to assess if the project was delivered in line with its intended scope and budget and in line with the requirements of the Infrastructure Guidelines.

It should address:

• Whether the basis on which the project was undertaken proved correct;

• Whether the business case and management procedures were satisfactory;

• Whether the expected benefits have been realised;

• The lessons learned including positive and negative findings; and the conclusions that can be drawn which are applicable to other projects.

The Project Completion Report shall be prepared by the Sponsoring Agency in accordance with the requirements of the Infrastructure Guidelines, for all projects, regardless of size/value. However, it is recognised that the nature of these reports should be proportionate to the relevant project, and short, simple reports are appropriate for smaller schemes.

11.3 Road Safety Audit (if applicable)

If the project involves construction of a road or other transport infrastructure, the Sponsoring Agency shall ensure a Road User Audit and Stage 4 Road Safety Audit is undertaken at this operating stage of the Project.

11.4 Post Evaluation Report

For all projects, the Sponsoring Agency shall prepare an annual Post Evaluation Report in respect of the relevant development for a period of 5 years post completion. The purpose of the Evaluation is to determine if the intended benefits and outcomes in relation to housing activation materialised and to judge the impact of the project or intervention. The HAO will provide details separately in relation to the format and content to be contained in the Post Evaluation Report.

12. Summary of Approval Process

= Hold Point for HAO Approval

[1] For projects >€20 million
[2] For all projects but proportionality shall apply. To be agreed with HAO PM.
[3] Aligns with Approval Gate 1 of Infrastructure Guidelines
[4] Aligns with Approval Gate 2 of Infrastructure Guidelines
[5] Aligns with Approval Gate 3 of Infrastructure Guidelines
**This stage may not be required for smaller projects. To be agreed with HAO PM